



## **United States Mission to the OSCE**

### **Statement on Afghanistan Election Support Team**

As delivered by Ambassador Julie Finley  
to the Permanent Council, Vienna  
October 6, 2005

Thank You, Mr. Chairman.

We welcome Mr. Jenness to the Permanent Council and thank him for his report on the work of the OSCE's Election Support Team deployed for Afghanistan's September parliamentary and provincial council elections. We applaud the efforts of the Election Support Team and all the OSCE Secretariat and ODIHR personnel who organized it.

The United States believes that the Afghan Government and people deserve the warm congratulations of OSCE participating States for conducting what we believe now to have been a successful election, in spite of logistical and security challenges and some allegations of procedural irregularities and electoral fraud that did not influence the overall outcome of the election. They have achieved yet another impressive milestone in the country's democratic development. Our appreciation also extends to the Joint Electoral Management Board and other international community actors who supported the Afghan voting.

In line with the Election Support Team's mandate, its report does not assess the Afghan election against OSCE commitments, because Afghanistan is not a participating State. However, we urge Afghanistan to give serious consideration to the findings and recommendations of the Election Support Team so that it can further consolidate its progress toward democracy and stability.

As is well known, the United States enthusiastically backed the deployment of OSCE Election Support Teams both for Afghanistan's courageous and democratic 2004 presidential election and the recent parliamentary and provincial balloting. Now that this first cycle of elections is over, we believe that the OSCE, along side other international organizations, must sustain its commitment to Afghanistan. The OSCE and Afghanistan should look for new areas of cooperation outside of election support.

Finally, we would like to thank other delegations that, along with the United States, made extra-budgetary contributions and seconded personnel to the Election Support Team.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.